



RUSSELLVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT
POLICY MANUAL

Policy Number:
Section:
Original Date:
Revised Date:

PURPOSE

This policy provides the necessary criteria and procedures for implementing and authorizing participation in the Russellville Fire Department's ("Department") Citizen Ride-Along Program ("Program").

The Department encourages community involvement in the operations of the Fire Department. This program intends to provide interested Citizens of Russellville, Arkansas, the opportunity to ride along with the Department on emergency and non-emergency fire and emergency medical services ("EMS") calls. It will help civilians understand and respect the daily duties of Firefighters, Emergency Medical Technicians ("EMTs"), and Paramedics in the City of Russellville and allow the participants to witness the role of the firefighter, gain knowledge of the profession, and illustrate the importance of firefighters and EMS professionals in our community.

POLICY

Eligible Participants

For someone to participate in the Citizen Ride-Along Program, they must meet the following requirements:

- Must be at least sixteen (16) years of age.
- Must not have a felony conviction or record.
- Must be mature enough to handle serious situations.

Only those persons with written authorization shall be allowed to participate in the program. Individuals that shall be granted permission to participate in the Program include but are not limited to:

- Citizens and residents of Russellville, Arkansas, who are interested in the Department's day-to-day operations.
- Fire, EMS, Police, and 911 Dispatch professionals from other communities, departments, or agencies.
- EMS students who are enrolled in a program at an institution that is unaffiliated with the Department but is interested in the services provided by the Department.
- Civilians interested in a career with the Department.
- Members of the News Media.
- Any other individuals approved by the Fire Chief.
- The Fire Chief may grant exceptions or exclusions.

Approval, Scheduling, and Assignment Process

All persons who wish to participate in the Program must complete the following forms:

Approved

Fire Chief



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1. Online Citizen Ride-Along Application Form
2. Citizen Ride-Along Program Release/Indemnity and Privacy Agreement Form.
3. Citizen Ride-Along Applicant Acknowledgement of HIPAA Obligations Form. **Participants must receive Russellville Fire Department HIPAA (patient privacy and confidentiality), Safety, and Infection Control Training before participation by the on-duty Battalion Chief or designee.**

Persons will only be permitted to participate in the program with prior approval and after being scheduled.

All program participation requests must be referred to the Fire Department Administration Office at least fourteen (14) days before the requested participation date. All ride-alongs shall be scheduled in advance. Participants must be listed on the Department's schedule to be authorized to participate.

All forms shall be submitted to the Fire Administration Office for review and approval by the Division Chief of Professional Standards. Fire Department Administration shall maintain all documentation and records relating to the program, including the participant's original request and release forms, for three (3) years.

The Division Chief of Professional Standards will send applicants written notification (letter or email) of program participation approval. The notification will include instructions on when and where the participant should report.

The Division Chief of Professional Standards shall notify the Battalion Chief on duty on the day of the scheduled ride-along, confirming the approval details.

If a participant cannot attend the scheduled date and time, the participant shall call the Battalion Chief on duty at 479-264-1709 before 8:00 am.

Approved program participants must be free from signs and symptoms of communicable diseases and illnesses (e.g., colds, flu, etc.) for the seventy-two (72) hours preceding their scheduled ride-along.

Hours of Operation

Participants may participate in the program at the following times:

- Monday through Friday (excluding holidays)
- 8:00 am until 8:00 pm

Authorized Locations

Participants in the Citizen Ride-Along Program shall only report to the following locations for participation in the program:

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1. Central Fire Station
107 N. El Paso Avenue
Russellville, Arkansas 72801
2. Fire Station # 2
109 Hilltop Drive
Russellville, Arkansas 72801
3. Fire Station # 3
1920 N. Arkansas Avenue
Russellville, Arkansas 72801
4. Fire Station # 4
2315 E. 16th Street
Russellville, Arkansas 72801

Participant Limitations and Requirements

Participants may ride a maximum of twelve (12) hours or a portion thereof in six (6) months. Participants who desire to participate more than once in six (6) months must make a specific request to the Fire Chief or designee, allowing a minimum of seven (7) days' notice. These requests should be carefully screened before waiving this limitation. Participation in the program shall not become habitual.

Participants shall be considered incident observers only and remain under the direct supervision of the Captain or Lead Paramedic during the ride-along. They will always stay in the fire apparatus or ambulance unless authorized to exit and must be escorted and supervised at all times while on incident scenes. Participants will operate under the guidance of the assigned Captain or Lead Paramedic and shall obey any directions they give.

Participants shall not wear structural firefighting personal protective gear.

Participants are encouraged to participate in shift activities, such as cleaning apparatus, cleaning the station, and eating.

General Guidelines

The following general guidelines must be adhered to at all times:

- The Department allows four participants to ride at any time, one at each station designated to participate in the program.
- Participants may not converse with victims or members of the public unless directed to do so by the Captain or Lead Paramedic.
- Participants shall not interfere with fire or EMS company activities at any time.
- Tape recorders, cameras, or other recording devices shall not be permitted unless specifically approved by the Fire Chief.
- Participants shall act professionally and be safe at all times during the ride-along period. If they have any problem, they should immediately speak to the Captain or Lead Paramedic.
- Participants shall be physically able to enter and exit the ambulance or fire apparatus without assistance and in a manner that will not hinder Department operations.

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- Participants must arrive on time, appropriately dressed, and prepared to learn and act professionally, representing the Russellville Fire Department.
- Fire Department personnel have the right to recommend to the Captain, at any time, that a participant be sent home and cancel their scheduled ride time if they feel a participant's dress, behavior, or actions are dangerous or inappropriate. If a student is sent home or their ride-along is canceled, the Division Chief of Professional Standards must be contacted immediately.
- Participants shall only leave the Department's premises once their scheduled ride time is complete. Participants must notify the Captain of their departure in a personal emergency or illness.
- The use of tobacco products is strictly prohibited on Russellville Fire Department property.
- Weapons of any type are strictly prohibited on Russellville Fire Department property unless approved by the Fire Chief.
- Participants' cell phones will be turned off or on vibrate during their ride time. Participants will only be issued one warning to turn off their phone ringer.

Safety Guidelines

- Participants will be assigned any necessary Personal Protective Equipment ("PPE") upon arrival at their assigned ride-along location (e.g., gloves, gowns, facemasks, glasses, and reflective vest).
- Participants shall immediately don all proper PPE for the assigned call for service.
- Participants will turn in any equipment issued to them at the end of the ride-along shift.
- Participants shall wear reflective vests on all emergency calls. The reflective vest will be compliant with current DOT and ANSI regulations.
- Participants shall only exit the ambulance or fire apparatus at the scene of an incident with instruction and guidance from the Captain or Lead Paramedic.
- Participants will not actively participate in extrication, hazardous materials, or firefighting activities. The incident commander can assign them to Medical or Rehab for accountability.
- Participants shall not operate in a Hot or Warm Zone.
- Participants shall participate in a Safety Briefing with their assigned crew and station Captain.
- Participants must always wear seat belts per Department policy.

Accountability Guidelines

- The on-duty Captain will assign each participant to an ambulance or fire apparatus. The participant will remain with that assigned company for the duration of their shift.
- Participants shall always be controlled and supervised by the Department's Captains, the Lead Paramedic, or EMT. With their authority, the on-duty Captain or Battalion Chief ensures a safe and guided learning experience.
- On-duty Captains and Battalion Chiefs can terminate any ride-along session for misbehavior or failure to follow the rules outlined in this policy.

Security Guidelines

- Participants shall be supervised in the station at all times.
- Participants will go with the fire apparatus and ambulance or leave the station when all companies respond to a call, and the participant does not respond for some reason.
- Participants are not allowed in the bedrooms or workout rooms and must remain in the station's common areas.
- Participants cannot use department computers, networks, or other department equipment.

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- Participants are only permitted to occupy the following areas at Central Fire Station:
 - Apparatus Bay
 - Apparatus Bay Restroom
 - Training Room
 - First Floor Restroom
 - Second Floor Kitchen and Dayroom
 - Second Floor (Unassigned) Restroom
 - Back Gate (Inside the Perimeter)
- Participants are only permitted to occupy the following areas at Substations:
 - Apparatus Bay
 - Front Restroom
 - Kitchen
 - Dayroom

Dress Code

Participants are required to wear appropriate attire and maintain good hygiene, which includes:

- Professional attire and good hygiene shall be required at all times.
- Shirts must be collared, clean, fit well, and be free of defects.
- Sweat pants, shorts, skirts, or dresses may not be worn during the ride-along. Pants must be clean, of durable material, and accompanied by a belt. They must also be free of holes and not faded or baggy.
- Open-toed shoes may not be worn. Shoes must be durable and suitable for station and emergency activities. They must also be black and support the participant's ankle.
- Clothing with offensive writing or pictures shall NOT be permitted during the ride-along period. Failure to abide by this may cause termination of the ride-along. Shirts that display the Russellville Fire Department logo are prohibited.
- Ball caps or hats are acceptable if the participant's school or department issues them.
- Hair must be clean, well-groomed, neatly trimmed, and styled to not interfere with vision or create a safety hazard. Hair that is such that it may interfere as described must be pulled back and secured in a ponytail. Hairstyles or coloring that draw attention or appear to deviate from the community norm substantially are unacceptable.
- Facial hair is permitted. Beards and mustaches must be neatly trimmed and not too long to create a safety hazard.
- Participants may wear minimal jewelry. Nose, eyebrow, and facial piercings are not allowed.
- Questionable cases of proper grooming shall be referred to the Battalion Chief, who will determine appropriateness.

Participant Rules and Etiquette

- Participants should familiarize themselves with the Russellville Fire Department's facilities.
- Participants are only allowed to access approved areas of the fire station.
- Participants shall familiarize themselves with the ambulance and equipment to which they are assigned.
- Participants may bring snacks or meals to the fire station and use the station's refrigerators and other kitchen facilities. However, they are expected to clean up after themselves; no exceptions will be allowed.
- Food in the fire station's refrigerators, pantries, and counters belong to the shift members on duty and is not to be consumed unless it is offered to the student.

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- Participants are expected to contribute to the costs associated with any meals provided by the shift on duty.
- Participants will refrain from sleeping at any time during their ride-along time.
- Participants may use the tables and chairs in the dining area during downtime in the fire station.
- Participants shall assist with duties such as washing ambulances or fire trucks, cleaning the station, or performing routine tasks.
- Participants are not allowed to use their cell phones during emergency operations except in emergencies and after gaining permission from the Captain or Lead Paramedic.
- Participants shall refrain from playing games on their cell phones during ride-along time.
- Participants shall not post anything on their personal social media accounts regarding their ride-along time at the Russellville Fire Department.
- Participants must always be prepared to leave the station as calls are received.
- Participants will always listen to and follow the Captain or Lead Paramedic's instructions.
- Participants are expected to take an active role in patient care at every opportunity at their skill level and in the presence of a preceptor.
- Participants can only observe operations at all EMS, rescue, and fire scenes.
- Participants are expected to conduct themselves professionally and uphold the ideals of the Russellville Fire Department at all times during their ride time.
- Participants should refrain from chewing gum in front of patients.
- Vulgarity or profanity will not be tolerated by any student at any time and will be grounds for immediate dismissal.

Approved

Fire Chief